

Report to PARENTS

Managing Your Child's Health Issues at School

If your child has a health issue, it is absolutely essential that you and your child's school work together as a team. Here are important strategies to advocate on behalf of your child.

Share the facts.

Each medical issue carries its own set of "management" needs. Provide school personnel with this information. For example, if your child has diabetes, you will need to outline your child's insulin schedule, meal plan, and testing times, as well as how to recognize and treat blood sugar crises. The same type of detailed information—what to look for, what to do, how to follow up—should be completed for every health issue, from epilepsy to asthma.



Create an IEP.

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is used for children with disabilities, but can also be applied to children with medical issues. Work with the school to create a written plan detailing the school's role in your child's care, noting any special accommodations the school may need to make.

Get academic support.

Make sure that teachers understand that your child may occasionally need to miss class because of his or her condition. Discuss how your child will make up missed work.

Know who to tell.

Clearly, your school nurse, classroom teacher, and principal need to be aware of your child's specific medical needs. Depending on your child's condition, other staff (cafeteria workers, coaches, bus drivers, and playground supervisors) may also need to be kept in the loop so they can properly respond to a situation or prevent one from occurring.

Help your child answer questions.

Children can be curious about anything that's out of the ordinary. Classmates may ask your child about his or her condition. Role-play with your child to anticipate the types of questions others might ask and how best to answer them.

Stay up-to-date.

Make sure that the medical information on file at your child's school is up-to-date. Ensure that necessary medical supplies are on hand. Work with the school nurse to make sure you are informed well in advance if any supplies need to be restocked.

Turn to the experts.

Many health conditions have advocacy organizations that provide educational materials targeted to school-age children. If you feel it would be helpful, contact the organization and request materials to share with your child's class.